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ABSTRACT

Four papers focus on approaches to providing literacy education. "Language and Community Building: An Intergenerational Approach" (Gail Weinstein-Shr) describes a Temple University (Pennsylvania) program to involve volunteers in English-as-a-second-language instruction to refugee children and their elders. This program provides volunteer and organizational experience as well as cross-cultural and intergenerational interaction for students and community members alike. "Literacy in the Refugee Camps in Southeast Asia" (Allene Guss Grognet) outlines the U.S. Department of State's efforts to prepare Southeast Asian refugees in English language and literacy skills before they emigrate to the United States. "Illiteracy: How a School District Copes" (Dalia P. Meza) discusses the District of Columbia's public school program and its means of assessing, placing, and instructing a varied limited-English-speaking population. "Adult Illiteracy: Implications for Parent Involvement" (Wayne W. Haverson) reviews approaches to reading instruction for limited-English-speaking adults and the implications of adult literacy education for parent involvement in the children's education. A discussion of the four presentations by two specialists is also summarized. (MSE)

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PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACY

Language and Community Building:
An Intergenerational Approach — Gail Weinstein-Shr

Literacy in the Refugee Camps
in Southeast Asia — Allene Guss Grognet

Illiteracy: How a School District Copes — Dalia P. Meza

Adult Illiteracy:
Implications for Parent Involvement — Wayne W. Haverson

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LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING: AN INTEGENERATIONAL APPROACH

Gail Weinstein-Shr
Project LEIF, Temple University Institute of Aging

In the last decade, English language programs for refugees have been increasingly geared toward job-related communications skills for employable adults. Little attention has been given to the place of language in the community as a whole, both within each ethnic group as well as between the refugees and their English-speaking neighbors.

Elderly refugees, for example, are typically ignored, as their adult children are trained for employment. This group is burdened by isolation, drastic role changes in their family and community, and a variety of other factors related to their relocation in the United States. This isolation contributes to tension in multi-ethnic communities where refugees have not had opportunities to interact with their new English-speaking neighbors in positive ways. With little experience in formal schooling, adults are ill-equipped to support their children in the schooling process. Young refugee children, therefore, also need a "leg-up" as they adjust to their new school settings.

Project LEIF, Learning English through Intergenerational Friendship, is a model program sponsored by Temple University's Institute on Aging, in which an intergenerational core of volunteers is recruited from older adult groups, local colleges, universities and local community organizations. Specifically, elderly native English speakers were matched with refugee children, and young native English speakers were matched with elderly refugees. The overall goals of the project were:

(1) To recruit and train a corps of young and elder volunteers to teach English as a Second Language to refugee children and elders.

(2) To provide a minimum number of hours of tutoring to a minimum number of Philadelphia residents and their families.

(3) To increase the ability of older refugees to access existing health and social services and to break their isolation.

(4) To help refugee children "catch up" in school.

(5) To provide college students with an opportunity for community service and cross-cultural experience.

(6) To develop organizational skills among refugee leaders.

(7) To provide elders with an opportunity to work with children in a setting where they have much to offer.

(8) To provide opportunities for positive cross-cultural interactions through participation in community events.

(9) To foster understanding and communication among diverse ethnic subgroups through the creation of cross-generational and cross-cultural relationships.

(10) To provide a model for national replication.

In this paper I will report briefly on how this demonstration program was implemented, including planning, recruitment, training, providing of ESL services, and multi-cultural events. Also provided is a summary of the results of an extensive evaluation of the first year of the programming, with thoughts on the promise and the pitfalls of intergenerational programming as an approach to language learning and community building.

Planning. The most time consuming and important phase of the project, in my opinion, was the planning phase. It was crucial to adequately assess both the needs and the resources of the community. Part of this process included identifying community leaders who may or may not have official positions in the community. An advisory committee was formed, including leaders of the Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), religious and community leaders who may or may not have official positions in the community, and experts in ESL materials and training. The MAA leaders helped assess the real needs of community members as they themselves perceived them (not just the needs that outsiders thought they had). They also helped to identify community members who desired tutors, and provided feedback to guide the planning of tutor training and selection of appropriate materials. ESL experts were helpful in choosing the materials, developing appropriate training, and selecting tools for language proficiency assessment.

Recruitment. Volunteers were recruited from college campuses, church congregations, community groups and older adult groups. A variety of recruitment methods were used, including use of the media such as radio and newspapers, as well as distribution of flyers, and personal presentations. The most effective methods of recruitment seemed to be in-person presentations, followed up with written information. Contacts were developed with key professors, community leaders and volunteer agency personnel.

Altogether, in the pilot year, 70 volunteers were recruited. Of these, 52 gave a substantial commitment to tutoring. Because of volunteer turnover, it was necessary to see recruitment as an ongoing process of keeping the program strong. As the program grew, recruitment became easier, since current tutors were the best promoters of all!

Training. All volunteers were required to participate in six hours of preservice training, and six hours of follow-up shortly after tutoring began. The purpose of the division of hours was to permit tutors to focus their questions and their learning on the needs of their particular students. Training included a language exercise to sensitize tutors to the language learning process, as well as specific methods for teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing. During the training they were familiarized with the core curriculum materials as well as supplementary materials available. Training also included methods of adapting materials to students' individual needs as well as designing lessons from scratch. Tutors were given information about the culture, history and background of their students.

Bi-monthly in-service training sessions were provided to solve tutors' specific teaching problems, to introduce new teaching ideas and materials, to introduce more cultural information on the students, and to provide general support.

Provision of ESL Services. In the pilot year, five elder tutors worked in five elementary school classrooms with individuals or small groups, and 47 younger tutors worked with roughly 100 adult refugees in a community learning center as well as in students' homes. Student-tutor pairs were encouraged to

meet once a week in the learning center in order to break the students' isolation and to provide material and moral support for the tutors. The second session each week was ideally held in the student's home, permitting the tutors to learn more about the lifestyle and needs of their students and to foster a closer, more personal relationship between the participants. Where transportation or child-care were problematic, either site could be used for both sessions.

English lessons were focused not only on grammar and literacy, but rather on providing the student with communicative competence for daily living. The purpose was to enable students to begin to become more self-sufficient, and to form relationships with their English-speaking neighbors. For this reason, focus was primarily on listening and speaking skills for specific common situations.

To ensure that the learning center would be conducive to language learning and relationship building, community leaders were consulted in choosing a place that would be familiar and comfortable for students. Refreshments were provided to encourage informal gathering and conversation between tutors and students.

Multi-Cultural Events. Community events were planned for students and tutors to include their families and to become acquainted away from the books. Pot-luck suppers in which everyone brought food from their own countries were very popular. Activities at these events included recognition of the contribution of the tutors as well as the progress of the students. Folksongs were taught and sung. A farm trip was also a great success, particularly for students from agricultural societies and their tutors. Lesson plans about farm animals and implements were circulated to the tutors in advance, so language and fun activities could be integrated. The best way we planned these events was with the help of the advisory board as well as with the tutors and students themselves.

Evaluation. In order to provide promise for replication in other sites, the program was systematically evaluated with both process and outcome components. Data gathering included: 1) The number, ages and other relevant background information of the individuals recruited into the program as tutors and students; 2) the efficacy of various strategies for recruiting volunteers; 3) the number of recruits completing training and their evaluation of the training component; 4) the efficacy of strategies to reach adults and children most in need; and 5) the success of multi-cultural events. The outcome evaluation component consisted of a series of pre-post measures on those dimensions designated as targeted benefits, such as language acquisition and intergenerational/intercultural understanding. The findings are available at the Institute on Aging.

The hard data in the evaluation show that the recruitment and tutor-hour goals were more than met. The measures indicate that students showed improvement in language proficiency, tutors exhibited more positive and understanding attitudes toward Asian refugees.

However, it is the small successes that don't show as easily in the grand counts. One student went to the post office with his tutor, and then tried it by himself for the first time. Another student now answers the phone with a cheerful "hello!" rather than picking up the phone in confused silence or not answering at all. Tutors tell happily of the delicious food they are given. One tutor's family gave her student's family a Christmas tree, and helped to decorate it. The stories go on.

The process has not been without pitfalls, however. In the original pilot, the staff hours needed to make the project work were greatly underestimated. Relationships with community leaders cannot be created instantly; they must be cultivated slowly for trust to grow. An intercultural project can only work if it is truly collaborative, and collaborative relationships require time to develop. Volunteers are not "free" resources; they require much input and support. Those who would venture to create a community program that works must have the resources (including time) to build an environment where learning can take place and trust can grow. From our experiences with Project LEIF, it is our feeling that it is worth the time and effort. Progress was evident in language learning. Above that, tutors and students learned about one another, found resources in one another, and created friendships that will last. Language learning and friendship are complementary goals; each creates the condition for the other. It is our hope that our experience can help the process by which communities can again become whole--with strong and enduring links across the generations and across cultures.

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LITERACY IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Center for Applied Linguistics

In 1980, the U.S. Department of State began the largest training program ever mounted. All refugees coming to the U.S. from Southeast Asia, ages 16-55, were to be trained in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Cultural Orientation (CO) over a fourteen-week period. In 1982, the program was extended to 20 weeks for the lowest level students to accommodate a component on Work Orientation (WO), and in 1985 a new language and academic skills program, Preparation for American Secondary Schools (PASS), was mounted for adolescents, ages 13-16. At the beginning of 1986, the program was extended to 20 weeks for all refugees, with WO now required for higher level students as well. The main goal of the overseas training program is to give refugees a "headstart" or a "leg-up" on re-settlement; to give them the basics of ESL and CO, and introduction to the American world of work, and confidence in the fact that they can re-establish independent and productive lives in the U.S.

Of adult refugees in the training program, at any one time, 30 to 60% of the students are likely to fall into levels A and B. Level A represents those students who are totally non-literate and have no knowledge of English; level B students have some literacy in some language, usually their native language, but have no knowledge of English.

For both A and B level students, literacy, as well as language learning, is of prime importance. In a 20-week period it is only possible to equip lower-level students with enabling skills--in this case, learning to read, rather than reading to learn. This is done in several ways, depending on the ethnic group and/or the refugee camp. While curriculum goals are the same at all three training sites (Bataan, The Philippines; Galang, Indonesia; Phanat Nikhom, Thailand), methods and techniques of delivery differ.

In Phanat Nikhom, Thailand, a major emphasis is put on native language literacy (NLL) which is taught for 20 weeks along with oral English and English literacy. The Hmong and Mien, refugees from hilltribes which only recently acquired alphabets, have requested that they learn to read and write in their own languages, and this has been a motivating factor in teaching them English. Research on native language literacy as a factor in second language acquisition has shown us that students acquire language faster when they can relate to written symbols.

In Bataan in the Philippines, native language experience is used to get students to begin interacting with the English language in both oral and written forms. Nonliterate refugees come from three ethnic groups: Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer. Bataan also approaches enabling skills with more traditional exercises: matching, alphabet ordering, before/after games, site words, bingo, left hand/right hand discrimination activities, sentence scrambling, etc. Galang and Phanat Nikhom also use these same approaches, but designed to fit their own needs.

For the higher levels, (C, D and E), reading takes the form of manuals and forms at work, job and career information, instructions for medicines and household mixtures, the ins and outs of resettlement and reading about the U.S.

Teachers try to impart the idea that the U.S. is a highly literate society, despite easy availability of the mass media, and that reading is a major tool in information retrieval and often problem solving.

Adults are also encouraged to take part in the learning experiences of their children, particularly their adolescent children attending the PASS program.* The idea of parent/teacher conferences is stressed, as is participation of parents in PTA and other school projects. Sometimes family literacy takes place on a voluntary basis in the evenings, and parents and children learn together.

It is hoped that the experiences in the refugee camps will transfer once the refugees reach their new homes in America. Even if there is not much participation in classes during the first few months, the training in the camps will help the new arrival to cope with the written word which bombards the senses in any American city or town.

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*A description of the PASS program is included at with the presentation by S. Patrick Redding, Parental Involvement: Building on Overseas Initiatives.

ILLITERACY: HOW A SCHOOL DISTRICT COPES

Dalia P. Meza
District of Columbia Public Schools

Refugee and immigrant arrivals have always been a population in need. What is particularly critical about our population today is the national economic scene which they face when they arrive. The context has changed from an expanding industrial economy requiring manual labor, to one in which expansion is occurring at a slight rate in the highly technical, white collar sector. In addition, public services have been cut and the private sector cannot bridge the gap. Jobs and public services, the underpinnings that sustain a child's education, are running very thin indeed. The support to shore up the underpinnings is increasingly falling upon the schools; in our case, the Division of Bilingual Education of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS).

An outstanding example of this situation exists in the Hispanic community which accounts for 10% of the population of the District of Columbia.

- o D.C. Government services officially available to refugees and the undocumented is 0%.
- o Participation by Latinos in child and family services and protective services is less than 1%.
- o Latino participation in District housing is close to 0%.
- o Latino participation in District services to the handicapped is 2.2%.
- o Latino participation in District health services is 4%.
- o Latino participation in child care services is 4.5%.
- o Latino representation in the city's workforce is the same as it was in 1971, defying one of the government agency's Equal Economic Opportunity Affirmative Action plans: less than 1%.
- o Latino participation in employment training programs is 4%.
- o Latino representation in the District's sponsored programs in education, recreation and the arts is 3.4%.*

In the DCPS we have 7,326 students who have a home language other than English. They come from 132 different countries and represent 91 different languages. Of the 7,326 ESL students, 6,398 are enrolled as non-English speakers. Of these children almost 69% or 3,430 are Spanish speakers with the largest group coming from El Salvador.

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*The figures cited are from the Ad Hoc Coalition for a Latino Community Agenda "Washington, D.C.'s Latino Agenda," June 7, 1985. Washington, DC: De Emilio Associates and Nena Terrell.

The second largest group is comprised of students who speak one of several Chinese languages. Other major languages are French, Portuguese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Amharic, French Creole, and Tigrinya.

All of the above factors directly impact on our school system as the schools become the institutions to which newcomers turn for social forms of assistance.

For many of our refugee families and children without families, the DCPS is their first encounter with the so-called "U.S. life." Whether from the Far East, the Near East, Africa, South America or Central America, they share many of the following characteristics in common:

- A low level of literacy in their native language. Many are non-literate or severally academically delayed. This description often is also true for the parents.
- Poor nutrition: small in stature, poor teeth, skin pallor.
- Non-English speakers: approximately 2% speak English fluently, but 79% speak no English at all.
- A lack of knowledge of our educational setting and expected behavior.
- Early teens who are employed during/after school. Adulthood comes early to these children.
- Boys 13-16 years of age without a family, relatives or permanent residence.
- They and/or their families frequently move around within the city.
- The families are divided among several residences.
- They are from rural areas in their native countries. Some come from refugee camps.
- They are children of war/revolution who have lived in fear of soldiers, real bombing, and seeing family members being taken and shot. For many of the children, to have seen dead bodies in significant numbers is not unusual.
- They come from refugee camps where health and educational services are lacking.
- They live in excessively overcrowded housing.
- The head of the household is a single mother.
- Parents work two full-time jobs.
- They have large families.
- They are parents who have lived here 5 years and then brought their children. Long separations from the parents are not unusual.

How does DCPS meet the needs of these children? The assessment center at the Bilingual Division interviews the parents and children and attempts to help them secure the essential documents of birthdate documentation, proof of residency, and immunizations. We try to get an idea of the student's educational experience and achievement. Has the student been in a refugee camp? Has he been out of school, and if so, for how many years?. Interviews are conducted in English, Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Cantonese, or Mandarin.

In DCPS we receive as few as 11 and as many as 94 students per week. One week in which 94 students were received had the following composition:

Chile	1	Nigeria	5
China	2	Peru	1
Colombia	1	Pakistan	2
Dominican Republic	4	Philippines	1
Egypt	1	Soviet Union	1
El Salvador	57	Thailand	1
Ethiopia	1	Trust Territory of the Pacific	1
Guatemala	3	Venezuela	1
Mexico	1	Zambia	2
Nicaragua	5	USA (non-English speakers)	2

TOTAL = 93

Of the 74 Spanish speakers, 57 were Salvadorans.

A placement in DCPS takes into consideration the student's school boundary by residence, age, literacy level, and family needs. The following programs are considered when placing the student, where available:

- A full bilingual school in English and Spanish.
- LABS(Lang age Acquisition and Basic Skills) for Spanish speakers, ages 11-18. In this program, designed for non-literates or those severally academically delayed, instruction in science and social studies is provided in Spanish.
- Microlabs designed to supplement the educational program by using microcomputers in the development of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Computer-based training from bilingual teachers, parents and students at two schools.
- An ESL program, essentially a "pull-out" program which varies with the literacy or language needs of the students and the language abilities of the teachers.

In serving these students we are constantly working on curriculum development, monitoring a student's academic progress, and teacher accountability.

How does a school system cope? We hope, as in the DCPS, with compassion, commitment, and flexibility.

ADULT ILLITERACY: IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Wayne W. Haverson
Oregon State University

"The refusal to acknowledge those who are our sons or daughters, brothers, sisters, neighbors, fellow citizens, or former students, but whom we have relegated to statistical oblivion, holds some dangers that a sane society would not ignore. Societal denial of the crime by which it lives (permitting illiteracy to continue) demonstrates political ineptitude and ethical betrayal; but it also tells us of the civic pride that goes before a fall." (Kozol, 1985)

Jonathan Kozol's words capture the depth of feeling about illiteracy in the United States today. Estimates of the number of illiterates or functionally illiterate in America and the cost of illiteracy to the public vary, but by any account, they are extremely high. Robert Barnes in a study done by the Census Bureau in 1982 found the illiteracy rate to be 9 percent for adults whose native language is English and 48 percent for those whose native language is not English.

In this study, commissioned by the Census Bureau, 3,400 adults completed a literacy test (Sample questions are included at the end of this paper.) The test had 26 questions requiring the same degree of difficulty as the sample. A respondent who got 20 correct answers out of 26 questions was considered to be literate in English. The failure rate was 13 percent.

The New York Times, which printed a report on the survey, made the following analysis of its findings:

- Thirty-seven percent of illiterates speak a language other than English at home; among that group, 82% are immigrants and 21% entered the United States in the last six years.

- About 14% of those who speak a language other than English at home were probably literate in their own language, based on their reported education.

The test identified various factors as potential risks contributing to the likelihood of illiteracy. These risks included education, immigration status, use of language other than English, race, age and poverty.

It should be pointed out, however, to quote Michael Harrington, "... forget the numbers game. Whatever the precise calibrations, it is obvious that these statistics represent an enormous, an unconscionable amount of human suffering... They should be read with outrage. (Havinghurst 1972).

Discussing and measuring the problem of illiteracy is not as important as doing something about it. What does it matter if there are 2 million or even 20 million complete illiterates? We're not even taking care of a small fraction of them. Adult illiteracy is, as Senator Simon suggests, the unspoken, hidden educational issue of the late 1980's (Kozol, 1985).

Forty-eight percent of those whose native language is not English in the Barnes study are nonliterate. For those of us who work in adult basic education

programs that serve limited-English-proficient (LEP) adult learners, this is not startling information. For those of us who are involved primarily with children, this may be new information. In any event, the implications for LEP parent involvement are enormous.

How can we expect parents to take an active interest in second language literacy programs, in developing skills and abilities that they themselves do not possess?

How can we expect those parents who are nonliterate in any language to provide an environment to encourage the development of literacy skills?

How can we as professional educators and policy makers help LEP adults provide a model of reading (in English or in first language) for their children?

How can we deal with this issue out in the open and make it a primary concern?

One immediate response is to provide LEP parents with more instruction in literacy in both first and second languages. The problem is that this poses a case of more not necessarily being better.

ESL literacy is being given increasingly important consideration in adult program design and methodology. However, relatively little published literature to guide the practitioner exists. Limited, if any, pre- and in-service training for prospective teachers of adult second language literacy is required. Perhaps, most importantly, there is a lack of understanding of the complexities of adult literacy. It is my belief that programs for adults, to an even greater extent than programs for children, need to be built on the collective knowledge of researchers from a variety of fields. At a bare minimum this must include: 1) a knowledge of the reading process; 2) a knowledge of the psychology of the adult learner, and 3) knowledge of the social context of literacy (Norman and Malicky, 1986).

In this paper, I will only deal with the reading process. Susan Ohanian clearly states that, "You can't be neutral about teaching reading. It requires partisanship and faith -- faith in words and faith in students. Without this faith, you begin to run scared and you're even in danger of being smothered by other people's precautions and prescriptions (Ohanian, 1985).

A review of the literature identifies two distinct philosophies of teaching literacy skills: 1) a decoding model and, 2) a whole language model. The decoding model focuses on pieces of language, building from the smallest units of language, i.e., sounds to larger units, or words and phrases; or on breaking down the larger segments of language into individual units (Smith, 1983). In the whole language model, the primary focus is placed on comprehension. Reading is defined as a language-thinking process involving an interrelationship of semantics, syntax and graphophonics (Goodman, 1970; Holdaway, 1985).

In decoding, great emphasis is placed on the mastery of sound-symbol relationships (Ekwall and Shanker 1983). It is based on the assumption that once this mastery has been achieved, meaning will automatically follow. Both beginning literacy and fluent reading are a direct result of decoding to spoken language. Learners are taught that once they have mastered basic phonics and letter-word recognition they can use these skills independently to glean meaning from print (Johnson, 1977; Cunningham, 1977).

Another form of decoding, a basic skills model, goes beyond sound-symbol and letter recognition. It identifies four distinct areas of language: vocabulary, sound-symbol relationships, grammar and comprehension. Each area is examined in isolation. The underlying assumption of this model is that meaning will follow if one can integrate the sub-skills that have been presented to the reader in the form of long lists of vocabulary words, grammar rules and exercises, comprehension questions relating to factual recall of predetermined material and sound-mastery (Liberman and Shankweiler, 1979).

Both of these models of decoding are essentially ineffective in the teaching of meaningful reading skills to language minority adults who are beginning readers in English (Vorhaus, 1984). These readers need to develop strategies to unlock meaning rather than to spend time attempting to make sense of isolated letters, words, and rules (Jones, 1981; Smith, 1983). The human brain is limited in the amount of information it can absorb, process and commit to memory at one time (Dolan, 1982). This means that reading must be a selective process which is necessarily rapid and that cannot proceed word by word (Smith, 1983). The application and integration of rules in the teaching of reading can only result in an overload of short-term memory. In a building block or decoding approach the meaning of one word will be forgotten before the next word is built, and thus, no meaningful message from print will emerge (Holdaway, 1985).

Furthermore, decoding does not allow the adult language-minority reader to take an active role in the reading process, to bring a knowledge of the world and of the particular topic to the text (Amorosco, 1985). It denies the very nature of adultness and places that person in a childlike environment, as though theory were blank pages in a book waiting to be written (Marling, 1978). Frank Smith suggests that reading is only incidentally visual. Understanding print is far more dependent on what the reader already knows, what is already in his/her head than print on the page. For reading to make sense, it must respect the world view of the reader so that the reader can actively, yet unconsciously, participate in construction of meaning from the printed page (Goodman, 1970; Smith, 1978, 1983).

This approach, a whole language model, is based on an understanding that language systems are shared (Smith, 1978). It offers a greater chance for the success of the beginning language-minority reader. In this interdependent system, the reader discovers not only the distinctive features in letters and words, but also those in meaning. The reader learns to take chances, to risk errors in order to learn about printed texts and to predict meaning. It places the primarily focus on reading and not on vocabulary building, rule mastery or sound-symbol relationships in isolation. The beginning reader develops the strategies of sampling, predicting, confirming or revising (Goodman 1970; Smith 1978).

Reading, then, is viewed as a successful interaction of conceptual abilities, background knowledge and process strategies. Comprehension is the target, not the decoding of sub-vocal utterances (Rigg and Kazemek 1983, 1985). The experience of reading and attempting to read presents the strongest component of the process of reading development. Reading is, as Ken Goodman suggests, a psycholinguistic "guessing game" by which the reader, a language user, reconstructs as best as he/she can a message which has been encoded by a writer in the form of a graphic display.

This, then becomes the faith the Ohanian describes. This can become the basis for literacy programs in the classroom and at home. Limited-English-

proficient parents can become involved in providing basic literacy training in first or second language.

In developing ESL literacy training programs for LEP parents that have a whole language, comprehension centered approach, the following taxonomy of meaning-centered objectives should be given attention. In addition, this taxomy can be used to assist LEP parents in developing learning activities at home:

1. The reader will be able to identify and interpret illustrations.

2. The reader will be able to sequence the order of the steps in a shared activity.

3. The reader will understand that oral language can be written.

4. The reader will be able to read his/her own language experience story.

5. The reader will be able to use the language experience story in order to make the connection to other printed matter.

6. The reader will be able to predict meaning based on backward and forward referencing.

7. The reader will develop a variety of individual strategies that will enable him/her to extract meaning from print.

8. The reader will develop the critical thinking skills required to make judgments concerning the correctness and usage of the English Language.

9. The reader will develop conceptual awareness by participating in activities that encourage recognition of categories, relationships and patterns.

10. The reader will develop predicting and inferring skills that help foster creative thinking.

Literate parents can help illiterate parents by working at home with a language process that is best learned in a global to specific fashion which minimizes abstraction (Jones, 1981).

To sum up, a whole-language-centered approach directs the learner to use his/her experiences as a means for extracting meaning from print. It uses as its foundation the prior knowledge and experience of the learner and slowly develops a framework from which the learner is able to make predictions about written language. Reading is a natural process that becomes more successful when recognition is given to what the reader already knows.

Frank Smith suggests that our challenge as teachers is not only to make reading comprehensible, but also to make sure that the instruction makes sense. Instruction that focuses on cultivating strategies to unlock meaning and that recognizes the language-minority reader as the greatest resource makes sense.

Too often in adult literacy programs there is not a match between the means to literacy and the major goals for literacy development, which are primarily social in nature. Work on words and letter sounds may teach adults how to read

and write, but it frequently does little to help them become part of the literate culture. Hence, there appears to be a need for considerable rethinking regarding literacy programs for beginning adult readers. One of the answers to the dilemma of illiteracy, or non-literacy, is not to provide more of the same thing.

What then are the major implications of adult illiteracy in parent involvement with second language literacy programs?

Designers of programs for LEP parent involvement need to be aware of the major implications of the high percentage of nonliterate adults whose native language is not English in both first and second languages. Adults at low levels of literacy development are print-deprived and non-participants in the literate culture around them. They seldom have clear notions regarding why people read, and generally view reading as a decoding task. Rethinking literacy training programs for these parents, as well as for prospective teachers of these parents, would entail developing meaningful literacy activities at home.

Literacy, in both first and second language, must be seen as an enpowerment, in a Freirian sense. It must be liberating in that adults are now able to function like literate adults in a literate culture. They become part of what Bhola describes as "the magic circle of the literate." What better way to join that circle than to provide the environment that will encourage and promote literate behavior in their children?

This, perhaps, is the major implication of adult literacy for parent involvement; the development in adults of a sense of fulfillment, resulting in a change in the way they view themselves and, in how they are viewed by those most significant others in their lives--their children!

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Census Bureau Sample

Sample questions given by the Census Bureau to 3,400 adults in 1982.

Directions: Choose the answer that means the same as the word or phrase with a line under it.

We cannot see you today. <u>When can you return</u>?

a. When was the last time you came?
b. Who should you call when you come again?
c. On what date can you come again?
d. Are those the papers you can return?

<u>Enter</u> your Social Security number here.

a. Find
b. Check
c. Show
d. Write

Directions: Choose the best answer to the question.

You should ask a friend or relative to help you fill out the forms if you cannot read or understand the application.

What should you do if you do not understand the questions on the application form?

a. Answer all the questions by writing "None."
b. Return the application unsigned.
c. Write to the notary public.
d. Ask a friend or relative to help you.

Directions: Read all of the paragraph first. Draw a line under the best word or phrase to complete each sentence.

Soon, you will receive a new medical services program identification card. It will replace all other medical _____. Before

a. bills
b. cards
c. types
d. checks

using the card you must sign _____ on the back. Don't

a. the
b. it
c. on
d. a

allow your medical information card to _____ by any other

a. be used
b. have destroy
c. go lose
d. get expired

person.

Source: Census Bureau

* * *

Discussants: Ms. Judy Daher, Principal, Redwood City Public Schools, Redwood, California

Ms. Linda Smith Kharde, Network Coordinator, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.

Daher pointed out that the presentations all spoke of empowering adults in various ways by providing them with literacy skills. She commented on a group that needs special attention, namely, high school LEP students who are orally competent in English but functionally illiterate. She pointed out that there seems to be a high correlation between their literacy skills and those of their parents, and that programs should address the needs of these parents.

Kharde reiterated the need to draw parents into the literacy process, but pointed out that schools should take into consideration the limited resources immigrants and refugees have when it comes to time and commitment.

Kharde stressed the necessity to develop better training materials for tutors.

The questions and discussion centered on the ways in which parents can be drawn into the school system and their children's education. There was a consensus that any method or activity which would reach and involve the parents was worth trying.